

# No-hubbers on community citizens group

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A community group that was formed to give voice to the concerns of McCalla residents about Norfolk Southern's planned railroad hub includes several members openly opposed to the \$112 million project.

Called Community Connection, the group recently held its first full meeting.

The community outreach group, or COG, was chosen to represent McCalla residents, churches and businesses in working with the rail as the hub project unfolds.

"From Norfolk Southern's perspective, the COG will facilitate better communications between the railroad and the McCalla community, which will in turn lead to a more positive and productive relationship," explained Rudy Husband, spokesman for Norfolk Southern.

Husband said the group, like others, can advance projects for Norfolk Southern to support financially.

The group also is expected to play a role if the project gains necessary approvals and construction begins at the 316-acre site this year.

The group could prove difficult for the company if its makeup is any indication. The 10 members were confirmed by a selection panel on Dec. 8 and include four known members of the No Hub Group.

According to the No Hub web site, Carl Addison, Pat Breden and Virginia Williams

are members of committees within the No Hub group, while Woody McDaniel is listed as chairman of the group's political action committee.

James Askew, Allen Farley, Joel Frederick, Jim Lowery, Steve Miranda and Sam Russell are the other members of Community Connection.

The high-level of involvement of No Hub members doesn't worry the railroad, Husband said.

"We certainly did not expect that all 10 members of the COG would be supporters of the (hub), so no it does not concern us," he said.

Members of group attended a McCalla Can meeting last week.

## Addressed myths

At that meeting, Norfolk Southern addressed "myths" about the project, and Sam Addy of the University of Alabama's Center for Business and Economic Research offered his opinion on why the project would be an economic boon.

Group member Virginia Williams said at the introductory meeting last month that if the hub project gains steam she is not sure all of the members of the group will stay or board.

"Our biggest challenge at this point is going to be keeping everybody at the table," she said.

Terry Finch, a founder of No Hub 4 McCalla, said he surprised to see so many